(Left to right): *Elisa DesPortes, John Rick, Alice Mann, Todd Wetzel, Blair Both, Orris Walker, William Coolidge, Hendree Harrison, Robert Gallagher, Anthony Thornel, Calhoun Wick, and George Andrews.*

The Enablers

Since lay people are 99 percent of the Church and a surge for self-determination has been loosed in the world, church people have naturally begun to cry, "More Power to the Laity."

To understate the case, power is not easily transferable, particularly when 1 percent has traditionally held it all. How do members of that 1 percent who would like to encourage lay participation gracefully step out of the power slot and allow others to step in?

Young clergy and professionals in the Church are trying to gather information on how to make that happen.

At Christ Church, Greenville, Delaware, the Rev. Calhoun Wick, 29, assistant rector in charge of developing future leadership for the parish from high school age to 35 and for developing the parish's outreach, was so enthusiastic about a project initiated and carried out by businessmen in his parish that he said, "Hey, young clergy need this kind of group, too."

In other parishes and dioceses young church professionals were also learning styles of ministry to the community and to each other from lay people.

● In Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the Rev. William Coolidge, 30, rector of the Chapel of the Cross, last year joined lay people from other denominations to sponsor a successful all-day teacher-training workshop. Out of that venture came Ecumenical Resources, an attempt to share existing knowledge, skills, and audio visuals. "But the most important part of this effort to me is lay people and clergy have a support group to go to if they want to have an effect and impact on their lives, their neighbors' lives, and their childrens' lives."

● In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the Rev. Robert Gallagher, 28, is working on a diocesan, interdenominational level as a consultant to enable lay ministries where people work.

● In Westlake, Ohio, the Rev. Todd Wetzel, 26, vicar of the Church of the Advent, provided training for lay people who now preach at worship services.

● In Philadelphia, Alice Mann, 24, a student at the Philadelphia Divinity School, is working with women in hospitals who would like to act together to change policies they cannot change alone.

● In Washington, D.C., Elisa DesPortes, is learning more and more about what it means for clergymen to let go and for lay people to take responsibility.

● In Detroit, Michigan, the Rev. Orris G. Walker, 30, rector of St. Matthew's-St. Joseph's Church, and his parishioners helped refurbish their church building. "And it gave us a unique expression of lay ministry" he says.

In Lancaster, Pennsylvania, the Rev. George Andrews, 30, saw a parish youth group take off on its own successfully.

Fourteen of these young professionals met in Greenwich, Connecticut, in February to: 1) share experience; 2) talk about what being an enabler means; and 3) try to evolve a definition of what lay ministry is all about and make that definition a part of the Church's vocabulary for the future.

"The Church has a way of discovering people in their 40's and 50's," Mr. Wick explains. "Our theory is capable, younger clergymen and professionals have to have a way to get together and share experiences before then.

"In addition we feel lay ministry is essential to the future of the Church. Lay people are our greatest but most underdeveloped resource."

The group discovered its definition of lay ministry was wider than many people's. To the group, the ministry of and by lay people means not only that lay people be enabled to take parish responsi-

by Judy Mathe Foley

ities but also that they live as Christians both in the community and in secular organizations and/or occupations. To do this people—both clergy and lay—need support and methods of getting it.

Members of the group are committed to lay ministry, but as the Rev. Peter Winterble, 30, assistant rector of St. John's Church, Georgetown Parish, Washington, D.C., notes: "Tension exists at places where lay people have really gotten into the ministry. It exists because the clergy—me included—really say one thing about lay involvement and mean something else.

"We have all had experiences with how difficult it is to let lay people exercise ministry when it goes totally against what the clergyman believes. Lay ministry is the original two-edged sword.

"It's difficult for a clergyman to let go. On the other side, lay people who are committed and articulate have one of the most difficult jobs in the Church—that is to function as articulate lay persons in daily life but to stay out of the 'in' group, to keep an identity as a 'non-expert.'"

The group had no easy solutions to those tensions and decided not to formalize its structure much beyond agreeing to meet again in six months to a year. But the experiences already shared—some of which are highlighted on these pages—are valuable because they indicate how the Church might handle one of its most important assignments for the future—enabling lay people to minister where they are in parish, community, and vocation, often without benefit of clergy. ◀

PAIN & PROGRESS

Elisa DesPortes, assistant to the director of Project Test Pattern, Washington, D.C., is a 1972 graduate of Virginia Theological Seminary.

From her work in Project Test Pattern, she can cite example after example of clergymen who can help lay people carry on ministries and ways it can be done.

"I define lay ministry as empowerment for people in parishes, people who are better able to assume responsibility for their lives. These are people who have an opinion, provide input, and do the work traditionally done by the rector."

Ms. DesPortes cites three qualities an enabling priest should have: 1) a basic commitment that he does not own the parish, that parishioners own it, too; 2) a determined, conscious desire to change behavior patterns that have built up through tradition, a determination to hold back and not assume all responsibilities; and 3) a willingness on the part of both clergy and parishioners to fail, to know their salvation does not depend on getting things right the first time.

"In most parishes, structures do not need to change to enable lay people to take responsibility," she believes. "People must change. Lay people must know they can be heard and that something will happen as a result.

"Clergymen must have some third-party support that can be a consultant, a group of clergymen, or some other outside person."

She gives examples of changes in parishes where lay people now have decision-making power and responsibility.

● In a mid-western parish where the clergyman always made the decisions, parish morale was low, infighting was high, and parishioners were tired of being led around. They no longer attended parish meetings.

Before each vestry meeting the rector was so tense he couldn't eat. He would go into the meeting, lay out the agenda, and the vestry members would rubber stamp his decisions. When he decided to make a constructive, conscious change in the leadership pattern, he forced decision-making on a vestry which was not used to it. The parish's every-member canvass failed completely because the rector refused to map out strategy or to step in when mistakes were being made.

In some cases, Ms. DesPortes finds, the only way to make a change is for the clergyman to remove himself until others step into responsibility.

In the case cited here, once the rector and the parish shared decision-making, the rector no longer felt every failure was his alone—the whole parish was involved in problems together.

● Another clergyman with whom Ms. DesPortes worked had extra duties outside his parish—diocesan consultation, hospital visiting—but he always felt guilty about spending time away from the parish. Parishioners, in turn, felt cheated because he wasn't always there.

When the rector and the lay people discussed this situation, the lay people began to take on more responsibilities and the rector was free to do his outside work. In this situation, once everyone was clear about the part he or she would take, the parish work was done much more efficiently and in partnership. ◀

The Ham Sandwich Club

The businessman's lunch is a popular time to do business. Parishes have often used that period to attract busy churchmen by catching them where they work. The Rev. Calhoun Wick, Christ Church, Greenville, Delaware, began the Ham Sanwich Club with that in mind. "But we found that businessmen would rather act than listen to speakers. It's proven to be a much better use of these men's talents than the traditional ushering tasks."

Fifteen professional people—lawyers, architects, doctors, bankers, real estate brokers, salesmen—belong to the Club, which takes on an action project each year and meets as a group only when a decision must be made or progress reported. In the interim, members are busy providing their talents to a project.

This year the Club offered help to the Latin American Community Center in Wilmington. Financially supported by the United Fund, the Center's building burned during a period of leadership turmoil, and the United Fund suspended support. The Ham Sandwich Club went to the Center's Board to offer help.

"We do whatever an agency feels is its most pressing need," says Jim Bray, economist and Ham Sandwich Club member. "We make a commitment of time—usually six months. And we make a manpower commitment, too, usually equivalent to the number of hours one full-time person would spend on the job."

The Latin American agency wanted to rebuild its center, so Ham Sandwich Club members began by helping with the insurance; an architect developed a design for the building; a real estate man did research on sites; other members helped serve on committees which re-designed programs. Club members are now writing a proposal to secure construction funds.

The Club provides the continuity and a pool of necessary skills to carry on a project, but it is not a static group—new members are drawn in as their skills are needed, others drop out as their jobs change and they move.

Though the Club's main purpose is to provide an agency with concrete assistance, its members also work with the agency's committees and board, leaving some of their management skills behind when their commitment is finished. Some members stay with the group after the Club's official job ends. Two former members of the Club, for instance, are now working to improve health care delivery in Wilmington, a project that grew out of last year's involvement with an inter-racial group. ◀

AN OFFERING OF TALENT

by Ellen Pollock

As a newcomer in the senior high school class at St. James, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, I quickly discovered that, in a sense, everyone was a newcomer. Because members of the class came from twelve different high schools, no one knew exactly who everyone else was.

The class advisor, The Rev. George Andrews, associate rector, was new to Lancaster and he didn't know anyone either! This may ultimately have been an advantage since new people brought new ideas. We decided to produce a multi-media show portraying the birth of Jesus.

Relying almost entirely on the knowledge of the few members of the group who had ever seen a multi-media production, we decided we needed a movie, slides, and contemporary music.

We chose the Nativity story from St. Luke's gospel as the appropriate text for the production. Then we were ready to begin filming the movie. Amid the flurry of locating equipment, finding costumes, and casting roles, we found ourselves with three hours to film our movie, including travel time to a nearby farm.

Next, we produced the slides. Interpreting Luke's gospel line by line called to mind local scenes which emerged as contemporary representations of the gospel: a "No Vacancy" sign, for no room at the inn, and roadsigns denoting the journey of Joseph and Mary.

We coordinated the slides and movie, and then chose music. Five or six songs by such composers as James Taylor, George Harrison, and Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young somehow seemed appropriate.

Three weeks later, we finished the production by coordinating the music, movie and slides. The

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UN WASTING HOURS

Alice Mann, 24, is a second-year student at Philadelphia Divinity School and a postulant for Holy Orders. She has worked as a chaplain intern in a hospital where she was assigned to the outpatient clinic which serves poor city neighborhoods.

As a chaplain she noticed how the atmosphere of the waiting room was always depressed, weary, somewhat bitter. "I sat in the same clinic myself as a patient the year before, and I waited more than an hour for my appointment," she recalls. "I thought it was a fluke."

Talking to people as a chaplain, Ms. Mann discovered that her long wait was no accident. According to clinic policy, all patients who were to see the doctor in the morning were given an 8:30 a.m. appointment. The doctor never appeared until 9 a.m.—and often later—and some patients never saw a doctor until almost noon.

Ms. Mann decided that trying to console the people who were waiting was pointless since the next week when they came back, they would still have to wait. Nothing would change.

She found some nurses were concerned about the problem, too. They explained that the policy had been instituted because some patients didn't keep appointments and doctors had been kept waiting. The nurses wanted to change the policy but didn't know how.

"I'm not sure just when it happened, but I became convinced that the ministry of a nurse or a chaplain or any other staff person in that clinic has as much to do with getting a better appointment policy as it does with giving a shot or counseling a cancer patient," she says.

"The supposedly healing environment of the clinic was laying burdens of its own on the already afflicted. And that was only what it did to those who came. That appointment policy affected hundreds more people who simply couldn't take half a day off from work to come to the clinic, people who should have been receiving treatment early before a minor problem became critical."

Ms. Mann wanted to provide an answer when nurses asked her: "What can I do?"

The problem was further complicated by the status women—mostly nurses—have in hospital administration.

"After several years of professional training, a nurse arrives on the floor and may well find that the doctor gives her instructions as if she had no brain," she says. "Many doctors don't realize the nurse has a special sphere of competence and accountability. Rather, the nurse is treated as the doctor's assistant."

Her concern for giving women support so they could change structures in which they worked, plus her experience with Metropolitan Associates of Philadelphia (MAP)—a national, church-sponsored research agency which tries to get skills to lay people so they can minister to the organizations in which they work—led Ms. Mann to found RELATE.

An Episcopal congregation, a Lutheran churchwomen's organization, and a United Presbyterian outreach committee contributed to RELATE's budget. Several nurses gave time and encouragement in the initial stages.

RELATE is working with a dozen or so nurses who are trying to carry out some kind of ministry within the hospital organization.

One group is using RELATE training to design and lead listening sessions with the nursing staff to encourage a problem-solving approach to changing hospital policy.

Another group, drawn from several hospitals, is meeting to discuss the change-agent roles these women assume to take their share of the responsibility for the health of the hospital as an organization. RELATE is proving some special support, skills, and visions to accomplish this difficult task. ◀

Advice for Enablers

How do you become a good enabler? From our discussions with the young persons about whom we've reported here, these suggestions emerge:

1) Encourage people with ideas
2) Provide structures in which the above can happen
3) Don't consider yourself the boss, but a part of a team
4) Provide resources and/or education when needed
5) Make good use of the talent available
6) Keep your own ego in check
7) Don't be afraid to fail
8) Be adaptable. If an idea doesn't work, but others want to redirect it, go along
9) Don't be afraid
10) Build yourself some support group for decision making

how it can work

Robert Gallagher, 28, lay ministry consultant for eight denominations in the Philadelphia area, is an enabler twice-removed. His work gives directions for parishes and individuals in their daily lives to carry out their own ministries.

"We hear a great deal about 'faith and work,' but little has been done to enable it. Many lay people do not see the congregation as a body of people who can be useful in making difficult decisions within secular organizations," says Mr. Gallagher. "Sunday has remained divorced from Monday not so much because lay people want it that way but because we have had few specific resources within the Church which enable the healing of that divorce."

Mr. Gallagher says lay people are the people who will make decisions as they must be made in secular organizations. "The agencies of the Church cannot 'instruct' lay people as to the proper decisions in any given case. Only the person in the position to be aware of all the factors that need to be considered can do that."

To support a lay person in his or her secular job or to help him or her get support in a parish, Mr. Gallagher provides consultants to parishes and to secular organizations. These lay ministry consultants have established seven lay ministry support groups in Philadelphia-area congregations, formed several change agent/vocational groups within secular organizations, and are now training eight people to help enable others.

Two examples of the kind of support lay ministry consultants can provide are detailed here. The names and places have been changed to ensure confidentiality, but the events and situations are real.

▶ John is a public grade school teacher, and he belongs to a support group in his local congregation.

John started the school year with a new administrator in charge of the school's operation. The administrator, Kathy, seemed to be pre-occupied with trivial maintenance tasks and not interested in the quality of education. Some of the teachers, John among them, were concerned about this. John took the problem to his parish support group for help in deciding what to do.

After this discussion, John decided to approach Kathy with his concerns. A group of teachers who felt as he did joined him, and they approached Kathy with an open, accepting attitude in order not to present a threatening situation.

After discussion with the group of teachers, Kathy explained some of the pressures on her from her supervisors. She agreed with the teachers on most topics but was unsure of her footing in this new job. John continued to work with Kathy, acting as liaison with the other teachers, and soon she was coming to him for feedback on ideas. He also checked with his parish support group whenever a problem arose.

John says he never thought of himself as a change agent although this example proves he can make change happen.

▶ Helen and Paul are both members of a team of change agents in a large clothing manufacturing and sales firm. Helen is an executive in the personnel department; Paul is a blue-collar worker.

Paul is black and determined to point out what he considers discriminatory hiring and promotion policies in the company. Whenever he brought up such things, management told him to wait and change would happen in time. He decided to show just how this looked from his viewpoint and started to come to work late, take long lunches, etc. When confronted on this by management, he would say, "Just wait, it will change in time."

Paul's immediate supervisor finally became concerned enough about this situation to suggest a meeting with Helen.

At the meeting Paul presented a series of demands he wanted the company to meet, like actively recruiting and hiring more black people in key sales and management positions. Helen agreed with Paul and arranged for him to meet with the president of the firm.

The president felt Paul's requests were valid and agreed to hire four black people in sales positions within four months and to set up a policy of active recruitment of black managers. Along with some other hiring policy changes, the company established an on-going group of black employes to review company policies and make recommendations for change. ◀

WHO WILL PROVIDE THE VISION?

The Very Rev. Orris G. Walker, Jr., 30, is rector of St. Matthew's-St. Joseph's Episcopal Church, Detroit, Michigan. In 1971 St. Matthew's, a 127-year-old church begun by freed slaves, and St. Joseph's, a dwindling inner-city parish, merged at the St. Joseph site. The building needed restoration, and parishioners pitched in to offer their skills. They scrubbed and restored the pews; one man helped speed the restoration job by offering a method of stone cleaning he learned as a boy in Italy; others helped with construction.

"By sharing the work, the people got involved with each other in a way they hadn't been before," Father Walker says.

Father Walker, who encourages lay people to "run with the ball," calls the parish a "truly creative, integrated situation" where people "pull no punches about the issues. There's freedom and a joy in that kind of situation."

Lay people are currently fighting recent federal cutbacks for social service programs, such as the Job Corps. Others are beginning a career counseling program for neighborhood youth. Father Walker just finished a Bible class for senior citizens, 250 to 350 of whom meet twice weekly at the church.

"Black parishes have always had strong leadership," Father Walker explains, "because the church was the focal point for survival. And I've been happy to see that the white parishioners here respond to the prophetic stance as well."

In the past, he says, the black priest kept the prophetic vision before the people, but perhaps in the future this vision will be carried by lay people. "People will continue to rally to people who express vision, who express the Gospel, whether they are ordained or lay." ◀